

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 14625

STADIS////////////////////////////////

EA ONLY FOR HOLBROOKE FROM AMBASSADOR MANSFIELD

E.O. 11642: XGDS-1
TAGS: EAID, JA
SUBJECT: GOJ SUMMIT STATEMENTS ON AID DOUBLING

REF: (A) STATE 185785, (B) STATE 189145

1. OUR EFFORTS TO PIN DOWN THE GOJ ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENTS AT THE TIME OF THE BONN SUMMIT REGARDING AID DOUBLING HAVE DRAWN AN ATYPICALLY STRONG REACTION FROM THE MOFA. THE POTENTIAL IS ALSO THERE FOR ANOTHER OF THOSE FAMOUS U.S.-JAPANESE MISUNDERSTANDINGS WHICH HAVE DONE US GREAT HARM IN THE PAST. THEREFORE, I HOPE YOU WILL GIVE THE MATTER YOUR PERSONAL ATTENTION, WITH A VIEW TO AVOIDING AN UNNECESSARY AND UNDERSIRABLE ESCALATION OF THIS MATTER.

2. SEPTTEL PROVIDES THE SUBSTANCE OF THE GOJ RESPONSE TO OUR EFFORTS TO CLARIFY AND AMPLIFY ON STATEMENTS ON AID DOUBLING MADE BY PM FUKUDA TO THE PRESIDENT AT THE BONN SUMMIT. BUT OUR MESSAGE PULLS SOME PUNCHES. ALBEIT AT THE DIVISION DIRECTOR LEVEL, WE WERE TOLD PRIVATELY BUT FIRMLY THAT MOFA WAS EMBARRASSED BY OUR HAVING SUGGESTED

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SPECIFIC NUMBERS FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE IN 1980 (THE TARGET YEAR FOR THE AID DOUBLING); WE WERE REMINDED THAT JAPANESE DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE IS PRIMARILY AN EXPRESSION OF JAPANESE POLICY TOWARD THE LDC'S, AND THAT THEY DID NOT CONSIDER IT A MATTER FOR NEGOTIATION AS WE APPEARED TO BE SUGGESTING. IT WAS ALSO SUGGESTED THAT MOFA WOULD NOT WELCOME FURTHER ATTEMPTS TO PIN JAPANESE DOWN ON THE

DEFINITION OF AID DOUBLING (ALTHOUGH THEY WERE OF COURSE PREPARED TO CONTINUE THE USUAL EXCHANGES OF INFORMATION ON DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE).

3. THE JAPANESE GAVE US THE IMPRESSION THAT THEY WERE PRIMARILY DISTURBED BY THE FACT THAT U.S. HAD SUGGESTED DETAILED CALCULATIONS AND SPECIFIC NUMBERS FOR WHAT JAPANESE AID IN 1980 SHOULD BE IF THEY DOUBLED IT ACCORDING TO OUR FORMULA. EMBASSY HAD QUESTIONED THE NUMBERS PROVIDED IN STATE 185785 AND THEREFORE HAD NOT PUT THEM DIRECTLY TO THE JAPANESE, PREFERRING AT THIS STAGE TO APPROACH THEM IN GENERAL TERMS. THUS WE WERE SOMEWHAT SURPRISED AT DIRECTION OF THEIR STATEMENTS AND WERE INFORMED THAT NUMBERS IN QUESTION HAD BEEN PRESENTED TO JAPANESE EMBASSY COUNSELLOR MATSUURA BY AMBASSADOR OWEN IN WASHINGTON ABOUT A WEEK AGO.

4. WE SUSPECT THE JAPANESE ARE ALSO UPSET BY OUR INTRODUCTION OF THE CONCEPT OF CONSTANT DOLLARS. THEY DO OF COURSE IN THEIR OFFICIAL REPLY MAKE CLEAR THAT ACCORDING TO THEIR RECORD THE PRIME MINISTER DID NOT SPEAK OF CONSTANT DOLLARS. THEY ALSO TELL US THAT OWADA, IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, DID THE TRANSLATING FOR THE MEETING BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER, AND THAT OWADA SAYS THE EXPRESSION "CONSTANT DOLLARS" IS NOT EVEN IN HIS ENGLISH VOCABULARY.
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5. I BELIEVE THERE IS POTENTIAL FOR SERIOUS MISUNDERSTANDING HERE, AND I HOPE YOU CAN PERSONALLY SEE THAT THIS EPISODE DOES NOT ESCALATE. MOST PARTICULARLY, IT SHOULD NOT BECOME PUBLIC THAT THIS ISSUE WAS A SUBJECT OF PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE PRIME MINISTER. WE WERE TOLD THAT THE OFFICIAL PORTION OF THE RESPONSE WE RECEIVED COULD ALSO BE TAKEN AS THE GOJ'S RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR OWEN. I HOPE YOU WILL TALK WITH HIM TO PLACE THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE. IT IS OF COURSE IMPORTANT THAT THE GOJ INCREASE ITS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE; HOWEVER, IT IS IN JAPANESE EYES (AND I MUST ADD IN MY VIEW TOO) NOT UP TO US TO TELL THEM HOW TO GO ABOUT IT AND HOW MANY DOLLARS TO SPEND ANY MORE THAN IT IS UP TO THEM TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR OWN BUDGETARY AND APPROPRIATION PROCESS. THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF MONITORING JAPANESE PERFORMANCE AND "GRADING THEIR REPORT CARD" IS BEGINNING TO PUSH TEMPERS BEYOND THE FLASH POINT AND IT IS TIME FOR US TO BACK OFF. CERTAINLY IT WOULD BE MOST UNDESIRABLE TO PUSH THE AID ISSUE AND POSSIBLY HAVE IT GET IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN. GIVEN THE SENSITIVITY OF THE BUDGET PROCESS, PUBLICITY COULD ONLY MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE GOJ

TO BOOST ITS AID PERFORMANCE.

6. MOFA TOLD US THAT, SINCE THE PRIME MINISTER HAD
ALREADY WRITTEN THE PRESIDENT AFTER THE BONN SUMMIT, THEY
WERE NOT PLANNING A FURTHER REPLY TO THE PRESIDENT'S
LETTER OF JULY 21 (STATE 189145). I BELIEVE THEREFORE
THAT WE CAN LET THE MATTER DIE. IF YOU FIND THIS APPROACH
HARD TO SELL, I WILL BE VERY HAPPY TO INFORM THE PRESIDENT
OF HOW STRONGLY I FEEL ON THIS MATTER. MANSFIELD

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